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FRAGMENT

OF THE

CHRONICLES

OF

ZIMRI the REFINER.

Found in a Cabinet of Jewels belonging to *NATHAN BEN AMRI.*

Juſt come over to enjoy the Privileges of a FREE-BRITON.

Newly tranſlated from the Original *Hebrew* by BEN SADDI the *Jeweller.*

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BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

CHRONICLES

OF

ZIMRI the REFINER.

BOOK I. CHAP. XXV.

Zimri ſent in ſearch of a habitation.

Ver. 20 AND the ſcattered remnants of Iſrael were weary of their wandrings to and fro in the eaſt; for the nations had perceived their devices, and they could not deceive them any more.

21 And there was a man among them of the tribe of Benjamin, whoſe name was Zimri, and he was a magician, and ſkilled in all the cunning and devices of his forefathers, and there was none like him in all the tribe.

22 The ſame was a refiner of gold and ſilver, and an artificer in copper and braſs; moreover his tongue was ſmooth as oil, and his ſpeech was ſoft as an harlots.

23 And the rulers of the ſynagogue took counſel together, and ſaid, Let us ſojourn no longer among this people, for they are a crafty people, and wary in their dealings; they

 are

are become wiſe like ourſelves, and they ſet at nought our devices.

24 Therefore let us ſend Zimri the Refiner to ſeek out an habitation for us and our children; for we have heard of a people beyond the ſea, as thou goeſt towards the north, who are of a ſimple heart, and of an eaſy faith.

25 Have we not heard of their riotous living? hath not their prodigality reach'd our ears? they have waſted their ſubſtance on ſtrangers, and their ſimplicity is become a proverb among the nations.

26 Therefore let us ſend Zimri among them; for he is a wiſe man, and of a fair ſpeech; and his words ſhall flow unto them like honey, and his ſpeech ſhall diſtill like the dew.

27 And he ſhall take unto the rulers of the land a peace-offering of gold and ſilver, and jewels, and precious ſtones; peradventure they will hearken to his perſuaſions, and give us a corner of the land; for his voice ſhall be ſweet unto them, and his arguments ſhall be *weighty*.

28 And if ſo be that they ſuffer us to dwell in the land, and do our pleaſure therein, then ſhall we promiſe to become their ſervants, and miniſter to their pleaſures: but we will purifie their gold in the fire, and purge their ſilver from the droſs.

29 So Zimri aroſe and took his journey, and he took with him two ſhe aſſes laden with ſilver and gold, and jewels, and precious ſtones, and the

the inſtruments of his labour; and he journied until he came to the valleys of the low country, as thou goeſt towards the north.

30 And he abode there thirty days, and he dealt with the changers of money, and he refined their gold and ſilver, ſo that there was no droſs to be ſeen amongſt it.

31 Then he paſſed over the ſea, and arrived at the great city by the river *Tameſis*. And word came to the rulers that Zimri the refiner was come up to the city, and they ſent for him.

32 So Zimri was brought before the C—n-c—r, and the chief T———r, and they queſtioned him; then he preſented unto them his gifts and communed with them about an habitation for his brethren to dwell in.

33 And the words of Zimri pleaſed them and they diſmiſſed him in peace, but charged him to tell no man; and he tarried there for a time.

CHAP. XXVI.

Britannicus rebuketh the people, &c.

BUT in thoſe days there aroſe a prophet among the uncircumciſed, a man ſkilled in all the learning of the eaſt and of the weſt, and full of the knowledge of the nations, and his name was *Britannicus*.

2 He remembered the days of their forefathers when they were a mighty people; before they were in ſubjection to ſtrangers, or had gone a whoring after their inventions.

3 They

3 They had not yet ſacrificed to mammon, nor worſhipped molten images, nor had they ſold themſelves to work evil, or take a bribe, as they did in the days of W---le the treaſurer.

4 Freedom was inſcribed on their banners, and property was written on their breaſtplates, and the edge of their ſwords was whetted againſt their oppreſſors.

5 Their ſhips play'd in the mighty waters like the great leviathan, they were the pride of the ſea, and none durſt vex them in vain.

6 For they ſaid, Surely heaven has ſurrounded this nation with great waters, and ordained her to be the miſtreſs of the deep, and her ſhips ſhall be her bulwark:

7 For they ſhall go forth like bees to all the corners of the earth, and bring gold and ſilver from the ends thereof, and none dare ſay unto them, whence comeſt thou?

8 Thus ſpake the people in the reign of queen B--ſs, and thus did they triumph in the days of C------l. Then they were a valiant people, and every man girded his ſword on his thigh, and they were a terror to their enemies.

9 But it was not ſo in the days of W----le the treaſurer; for their enemies troubled them round about, and they fought againſt them at the *Paſſo Caballos*, as thou goeſt to *Carthagena*, and the enemy vanquiſhed them, and ſlew of them 8000 men.

10 For this there was mourning over all the land. But the oppreſſions of the people were encreaſed

encreaſed, and their burdens were grievous to be born; yet wickedneſs abounded therein, for they had all corrupted their ways.

11 Therefore ſpake *Britannicus*, and ſaid, O ye fooliſh and perverſe generation! how are ye turned aſide from walking in the ways of your forefathers, and following the wiſdom of their counſels?

12 They gave you laws by which you ſhould walk, and made decrees from which you ſhould not depart; they humbled mighty kings for your ſakes, and brought down the pride of your enemies.

13 They ſtretched your dominions from the eaſt unto the weſt, and brought riches and honour from afar.

14 They laid the foundation of your government, and eſtabliſhed your liberties, that they ſhould not be moved.

15 But you have ſold yourſelves to do evil in the ſight of the people, and have followed the abominations of W----le the treaſurer.

16 Your judges have forſaken judgment, and your exactors have dealt unrighteouſly: They have increaſed the heavy burdens, and multiplied the oppreſſions of the people.

17 Yea, they have taxed all their ſubſtance, and ſet a price on the *light of heaven;* ſo that they conſume their bread in heavineſs, and their days in bitterneſs of ſoul.

18 Yet you have not regarded the cries of the poor, nor hearkened to the groanings of the people.

19 But your rulers and your nobles devour the fat of the land, and wallow in luxury and wantonneſs; their days are ſpent in deviſing miſchief, and their nights in lewdneſs and gaming.

20 They have waſted their ſubſtance in riotous living, and given the wealth of the nation to ſtrangers: they have made a covenant with a ſtrange *woman* *, and truſted in princes that have deceived them.

21 They have taken part with aliens and fought the battles of the wicked; ſo they have waſted the blood of the nation for nought, and have given the childrens bread to hirelings: for they truſted in a falſe *balance*, which is an abomination.

22 Then made they peace with the king of the *valley* †, when he was on the brink of deſtruction, and famine had almoſt devoured him; he ſought of them a pledge, and they ſent hoſtages to fulfill his pleaſure.

23 Thus they proſtituted the honour of the nation, and brought diſgrace upon their nobles.

24 Shall ye not be viſited for theſe things, and ſhall not judgment overtake ſuch a nation as this.

CHAP.

* Queen of H------y

† King of F------e.

CHAP. XXVII.

The propheſy of Britannicus the ſeer.

THEREFORE will I prophecie concerning you, O ye backſliding children, that corruption ſhall overſpread the land like a deluge, and bribery ſhall ſwallow you up like an earthquake.

2 From him that hath a talent ſhall ye borrow an hundred ſhekels, and him that hath no ſilver ſhall ye ſtrip of his *garments* *.

3 The Credit of the nation ſhall go for a pledge, and the revenue of the kingdom ſhall be mortgaged.

4 The leaders of the tribes ſhall pawn their honour, and the ſtewards of the people ſhall falſify their oath; they ſhall ſay of juſtice, what availeth it, and to honeſty, what profiteſt thou.

5 For ſcarcely ſhall be found among them a man of clean hands or a pure heart; therefore ſhall they ſet a price on the nation, and none ſhall be able to redeem it; until the days come, when the circumciſed among the nations ſhall flock together and overſpread the land.

6 For it ſhall come to paſs, that a decree ſhall go forth to call in, from all the ends of the earth, the outcaſts of Iſrael, even the ſcattered remnants of the tribe of Benjamin, that they may redeem the land, and eat the fruits thereof.

7 And,

* Vid. the diſarming act.

7 And, when the decree goeth forth, the circumciſed ſhall rejoice, becauſe of their deſire to the land; and they ſhall gather themſelves together, and ſwarm like locuſts throughout the provinces, and the nations wherein they ſojourn ſhall bleſs you for their deliverance.

8 And your houſes ſhall become deſolate, and they ſhall take from you the inheritance of your fathers: They ſhall conſume your childrens bread, and, in proceſs of time, devour your ſubſtance.

9 Your wives alſo, and your daughters, ſhall they raviſh, and commit abominations in your dwellings.

10 Inſtead of gold ſhall you have braſs, and, inſtead of ſilver, ſhall you have tin; for they ſhall *waſh away* your gold like duſt, and your ſilver ſhall they melt like wax, and it ſhall be to them for jewels, and bracelets, and diamonds.

11 And they ſhall ſpoil you as they did the Egyptians of old, and take from you your jewels and your ear-rings, and your coſtly garments, even the precious things of your houſes.

12 For your rulers and your nobles ſhall hearken unto them, and follow the counſels of Zimri, their leader; and, when they ſhall hear the report of his *talents*, they ſhall ſay, truly this is the man whom we have ſought; for he is a wealthy man, and able to redeem the land.

13 And we will make a covenant with him, and give him a corner of the land for him and his brethren to dwell in, and he ſhall give us gold and ſilver in abundance, and pay the debts of the nation.

14 How

14 How are ye deceived, O ye fooliſh people, and unwiſe; poverty ſhall be the reward of your ſimplicity, and bondage the price of your folly.

15 For, in proceſs of time, ſhall they purchaſe the land, and it ſhall be for an inheritance to them, and their children, and they ſhall increaſe and multiply like the ſand of the ſea, and wax ſtrong in power, and the children of the kingdom ſhall they caſt out as they did the Canaanites of old.

16 And ſuch as ſhall be left ſhall they make bondmen and ſlaves; and the beautiful among your wives, and your daughters, ſhall they take unto them for ſingers, and for dancers, and for concubines; and they ſhall ſmit them with leproſie and ſores, and their loins ſhall be filled with a loathſome diſeaſe.

17 And they ſhall make unto themſelves a king of their own tribe to ſway the ſceptre in Iſrael; and they ſhall thruſt you out of your temples, and take poſſeſſion of your ſynagogues, and the prieſts of the lord ſhall not enter therein.

18 In your houſes of judgment ſhall they eſtabliſh a *Sanhedrim*, and in the palace of your kings ſhall they ſet up a golden calf, and do ſacrifice thereto, and they ſhall call it the houſe of Rimmon.

19 And they ſhall execute judgment by the law of their prophet, even tooth for tooth, and eye for eye, ſhall be the law of this people unto you.

20 And your little ones ſhall they train up in their law, and to follow after their inventions;

and they ſhall be ſlaves unto them, to execute their commands whitherſoever they go; and they ſhall go about the city bare-footed and in rags to do their pleaſure.

21 Thus ſhall ye, your wives and your children, be plagued with this generation, until you awake out of your ſlumber, and quit yourſelves like men; until the ſpirit of your fathers return again unto you, and you ceaſe to tread the paths of the wicked.

Thus endeth the propheſy of Britannicus the ſeer.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Zimri afraid of Britannicus, writeth for Gifts, &c.

AND the the words of *Britannicus*, the ſeer, pleaſed the people, and they ſaid, ſurely he is poſſeſſed with the ſpirit of our fathers; for there hath not ariſen one like unto him ſince the days of *Caleb* the C--tſ--n, and *Fog* the J—l—ſt.

2 But the rulers of the land hated *Britannicus*, becauſe he reviled them, and dealt too plainly; for he perceived their devices, and the greed of their hearts; therefore they deſpiſed his propheſy, and rejected all his counſels.

3 Moreover Zimri was troubled becauſe of the ſayings of *Britannicus*; for he ſaid within himſelf, ſurely he will ſtir up the uncircumciſed againſt us, and they will ariſe, and hinder us to poſſeſs the Land.

4 Then

4 Then wrote Zimri unto his brethren, ſaying, there hath ariſen among the uncircumciſed, a wiſe man, and a prophet, who hath turned the hearts of the people away from us; for they hearken to his ſayings, and his counſels are held in reverence among them; but the rulers of the Land have him in abhorrence.

5 Nevertheleſs, hath he ſaid that we ſhall poſſeſs the land, and that it ſhall be for an inheritance to us, and our children, and that the uncircumciſed ſhall be caſt out.

6 Yet, peradventure, he is a falſe prophet, and coveteth to ſtir up the wrath of the people againſt us; for they are a jealous people, and cannot bear the yoke of bondage.

7 They have beheaded kings thro' fear of ſubjection, and have overturned princes for the ſake of liberty; they have ſhaken the thrones of the mighty, and given the crown of their anointed to *ſtrangers*.

8 But now their ſpirits are cruſhed with oppreſſion, and their backs are broken with heavy burdens: Yet let us not provoke them to wrath, or raiſe their indignation againſt us; for who knoweth but their ſpirit may return again, even the ſpirit of their fathers; therefore let us deal cunningly by them.

9 Let us ſcatter preſents among their rulers, and pour down gifts upon their nobles; and let us make fair promiſes to the king's counſellors; for there is hardly a counſellor but gold will purchaſe, nor a ſenator but ſilver will buy.

10 Then ſhall they turn the heart of the king towards us, and he ſhall not hear the com-

plaints

plaints of the people; for the *C——r* hath given me an anſwer of peace, and the *T——r* hath bidden me be of good cheer.

11 Therefore ſend ye over unto me by the hands of Ben Saddi the jeweller, ſix ſcore talents of gold, and 500 ſhekels of ſilver, that I may diſtribute them among the rulers of the land, every man according to his *weight*.

12 Send ye alſo unto me, of jewels and ear-rings, and bracelets, a very great ſtore, and an 100 foreſkins of your males, for a free-will offering to their wives and their concubines.

13 For the husband taketh counſel of the wife, and the concubine ruleth over them both, and none dare ſay unto her, what doth thou?

14 She is arrayed in gorgeous apparel, and fareth ſumptuouſly every day; and none can approach her lord, or get a token for good, unleſs they find favour in her ſight.

15 Therefore lay theſe things to heart, and do even as I have deſired you; ſo ſhall we proſper in the thing which we have undertaken to do; for this is a pleaſant land.

16 And his brethren of the tribe of of Benjamin did as Zimri deſired them, and every man contributed his mite, from the ruler of the ſynagogue to the meaneſt of the people, even to the full meaſure of Zimri's demand did they contribute.

17 So when Zimri received the gold and the ſilver, likewiſe jewels, and ear-rings and bracelets, in abundance; alſo an hundred foreſkins of the males; he went privily unto the rulers and the nobles, even to ſuch as bore ſway

in

in the king's councils, and diſtributed his preſents liberally among them; but ſo that his right hand knew not what his left did.

18 And he proſpered in all his ways, and the chief of the counſellors undertook to plead his cauſe with the king, and deſired him to tarry until the great aſſembly of the judges and the elders of the people ſhould be at an end.

19 So Zimri abode in the city, and he found favour in the eyes of prodigals and harlots; for he miniſtred to their wants and their pleaſures.

Thus endeth the Firſt Book *of the chronicles of Zimri the Refiner.*

BOOK. II. CHAP. i.

Device of the Tirſhatha to pay the debts of the nation, &c.

AND in thoſe days there was a ſcarcity of gold and ſilver in the land, becauſe of the wars with the * tyrant of the ſouth: The prince of the J——s aroſe alſo, and made war with the king, and he ſmote them with the edge of the ſword, and diſcomfited them; for W——m was with him.

2 But the debts of the nation increaſed exceedingly, and he owed unto his people 800,000 talents; and the people murmured becauſe of their heavy burdens.

3 And becauſe the gold and the ſilver was carried out of the nation by a ſtrange people to

* King of F----e.

to enrich the * empire of the eaſt, and the regions round about.

4 And the thing grieved the king, and he called unto him his chief counſellors, and ſaid unto them, There is a ſcarcity of gold and ſilver in my kingdom, becauſe of my juſt wars with the king of the valley, and with my rebellious ſubjects.

5 And becauſe of the 1200 talents of gold I have ſent yearly to the queen of the eaſt, and of the 600 talents of gold I have given to the little † king beyond the mountains, as thou goeſt towards I—y; for he is a man of valour.

6 That they might fulfil the covenant which I made with them, and that they might ſmite the king of the valley, even the proud tyrant of the ſouth, that he may riſe up againſt us no more.

7 So the people murmur becauſe of their oppreſſions, and the debts of the nation are waxed great, and there is not wherewith to pay them.

8 Wherefore, ſeek ye out from among you a cunning man, that is ſkilled in the ‡ knowledge of the nations; one that is fruitful in expedients, and dextrous in ways and means, as was W—le the treaſurer.

9 And let him bethink himſelf, how I ſhall compaſs the thing that is in mine heart, that I may relieve my people from their oppreſſions, and pay the debts of the nation.

10 Then

* G------y.

† S-------a.

‡ Politicks.

10 Then ſtood up *N——e*, the Tirſhatha, and ſaid, O king, live for ever, is there any knowledge among the nations and I have not found it out? or have they any devices which I have not practiſed?

11 Have not my days been ſpent in ordering the affairs of my lord the king? are there any ſecrets in thy treaſury hid from thy ſervant, or haſt thou taken any counſel, wherein I have not been partaker?

12 Am I not ſkill'd in all the learning of W—l—e the treaſurer, the wiſe and mighty man? is not my wiſdom known throughout the Eaſt, and have not the nations ſeen my cunning?

13 Have I not journied with thee to thine own country, even to the city of thy fathers? have I not ſettled the operations of thy counſels, and brought the nations into the *balance?*

14 But for *me*, the devices of thine enemies had prevailed; for they conceived miſchief, but I confounded them all: ſurely theſe are wonderful things, and worthy to be had in remembrance.

15 Therefore hearken unto me, O king, and I will tell thee what thou ſhalt do; thou ſhalt put forth a decree, and ſhalt call in the nation of the Jews, even the circumciſed, from the riſing of the ſun, to the going down thereof; for they abound in gold and ſilver, and they are cunning workmen, and dealers in jewels and precious ſtones.

16 And let you make them as your own people, and give them a corner of the land, and

and let them plant vineyards and fig-trees and olive trees, and eat the fruit thereof.

17 And it ſhall come to paſs, when a decree goeth forth to gather them from among the heathen, that they ſhall come from the eaſt, and from the weſt, and from the ſouth, and from the north, to poſſeſs the land, and they ſhall ſwarm like locuſts throughout thy realm.

18 For be it known to thee, O king *, that the riches of a nation is the number of its people: and every Jew that cometh into the land to dwell therein, ſhall make thee a free-will offering, even an hundred ſhekels of ſilver.

19 And the treaſures of the eaſt ſhall be open unto thee, and thou ſhalt abound in riches, and thy wealth ſhall be greater than was thy fathers of old.

20 Then ſhall gold be plenty as the ſand of the ſea, and ſilver ſhall fly like the duſt of the earth: and there ſhall no more be a ſcarcity of money in the land, and the debts of the nation ſhall be paid.

21 And the ſaying pleaſed the King; and he commanded *N——e* the Tirſhatha, and *P——m* the *T——r*, to go unto the judges of the land, and to the chief prieſts, and declare unto them the will of the king.

22 So *N——e* the Tirſhatha, and *P——m* the *T——r*, went up unto the judges of the land,

* A maxim of government.

land, and to the chief prieſts, and made known unto them the will of their lord the king.

23 And they took counſel together, and the thing pleaſed them, and they agreed to make a decree to bring in the Jews that were ſcattered up and down the face of the earth, as the Tirſhatha had ſpoken concerning them.

CHAP. ii.

Zadock's ſpeech againſt the decree, &c. *The Tirſhatha's anſwer*, &c.

BUT there was among the chief prieſts, a man whoſe name was * *Zadock*, one that feared God and eſchewed evil, and there was none like him among the prieſts of the Lord.

2 And when he heard of a decree to bring in aliens and ſtrangers, even ſuch as had rebeled againſt the God of his fathers, it grieved him to the heart, and he was wroth.

3 And he ſtood up and ſaid, hear O ye judges, and hearken O ye rulers of the land; ſhall ye do this evil in the ſight of the people, and in the face of the ſun; will ye bow down to ſtrange gods, and worſhip molten images.

4 Shall ye bring in among you the accurſed nation, even the outcaſts of Iſrael; ſhall ye join yourſelves to the blaſphemers of our law, or enter into covenant with the ſeed of the wicked.

* A worthy B-------p.

5 Shall ye give a corner of the land to the dregs of the earth, and ſhall the children of the kingdom be caſt out.

6 Will you give our wives and our daughters to the circumciſed, and ſhall the ſcum of the nations poſſeſs our ſubſtance; then ſhall ye join in their abominations, and be made partakers of their ſins.

7 Who hath prophecied theſe things unto you, or where are they written in our law; have ye not heard, have you not read, that they ſhould be ſcattered abroad among the heathen, and that they ſhould have no ſettled habitation.

8 And, will ye reverſe the decrees of heaven, and diſannul the ſtatutes of your Maker; and will you gather them together, and drive out the *G——te* and the *J——te*, the *C——l——te* and the *P——m——te* from among you, and give the land to the unbelievers.

9 Far be this evil from the judges of the land; for ſurely it ſhall be counted unto you for wickedneſs, and your childrens children ſhall curſe you.

10 Ye ſhall not deſire their ſilver or their gold, or their precious things, for they are an abomination; ye ſhall not give your daughters unto their ſons, or take of their daughters unto your ſons, leſt the righteous periſh with the wicked; for they are an accurſed generation.

11 Therefore, hearken unto me, and let not the decree go out of your lips, leſt you become a proverb among the nations, and your enemies laugh you to ſcorn; therefore ariſe,

and

and drive out *Zimri* their buckler, and all the circumciſed that ſojourn among you with a mighty hand; for they are a deceitful, a wicked and a rebellious race.

12 So ſhall the murmurings of the people be quieted, and you ſhall not provoke the indignation of heaven.

13 And, when *Zadock* made an end of ſpeaking, there was a murmur in the houſe, and he looked for a friend to ſupport him; but behold there was no man; for they were afraid of the anger of the Tirſhatha.

14 Then aroſe *N——e* the Tirſhatha and ſaid, truly, *Zadock* hath liſtened to the voice of the people, and hath been led aſtray by the ſpeeches of the rabble; for they are ſlaves to their own fooliſh imaginations, and blind to the good of the nation.

15 Can they weild the ſcepter of wiſdom, or guide the counſels of the king; do they know the ſecrets of government, or underſtand the myſteries of the throne.

16 They are a people of no knowledge, for their ways are ways of fooliſhneſs; he that heareth them is like unto them, and ſo are all they that believe in them.

17 Moreover, the zeal of *Zadock* hath eaten him up; for he hath charged us with worſhipping molten images, and following ſtrange gods. Surely we have nothing to do with worſhip, for that is given in charge to him and his brethren.

18 For this thing were they appointed, that they ſhould go up to the temple once a-week, and teach the law and the prophets; and each man

man hath his talent aſſigned him, that he may not be hindered in his work, for the workman is worthy of his wages; therefore look they every one for his gain from his quarter.

19 Let them inſtruct the ſimple, and the man void of underſtanding; but we ſtand in no need of their counſels, and we will have none their reproofs.

20 Unto them ſurely godlineſs is great gain; therefore let them watch over the flock committed to them, and feed the ſheep that are among them; and let them not bow down to the gods of Zimri, nor worſhip them: for, for this thing were they ſent.

21 But as for us and our children, we will ſerve the King; we will go out and come in before him, and give him counſels for good; only we will obey the gods of the nations, even the mighty ones of the earth.

22 As for the decree about which ye ſpeak, that we ſhould bring in the ſcattered remnants of of the tribes of Iſrael, *ſurely* it is a wiſe thing; for this is my counſel unto my lord, even mine, and it hath ſeemed good in his eyes, and will you gainſay the will of the king?

23 For by this ſhall we purge the debts of the nation, and cleanſe our hands of the heavy burdens of the people; and that is the deſire of him that ſwayeth the ſceptre among you.

24 Therefore let you not argue againſt it, nor urge vain reaſoning; for this is the fruit of my underſtanding, and it is marvellous in your eyes; it is not like the devices of fools, or the craft of men of little knowledge.

25 Have

25 Have I not exhauſted my *talents* for the honour of the nation? Have I not *laboured* continually for the happineſs of the people? Surely this is known in the ſecret counſels, and it is recorded in the covenants of the king.

26 Therefore ſpare ye not to paſs the decree, and let it be penn'd by the hands of a ready ſcribe, and ſent down to the congregation of the elders of the people, to be confirmed by them.

27 So they all admired the words of the Tirſhatha, and conſented with one voice; and the decree was written by the hands of a ready ſcribe and ſent down unto the elders of the people to be confirmed by them.

CHAP. iii.

Petition of the people againſt the decree.

AND it came to paſs when the people heard that a decree was going forth to bring in aliens and ſtrangers, even the deceitful generation of the tribe of Benjamin, that it grieved them to the heart.

2 And the men of the city, and the regions round abont, even the dealers in gold and ſilver, the dealers in corn, wine and oil, and fine linnen; yea the exchangers of garments, and all thoſe that bought and ſold, ſent up a petition unto the elders of the people, ſaying, Give ear, O ye elders, and hearken unto us, ye judges of the land.

3 Whereas

3 Whereas you are about to make a covenant with the circumciſed, and to bring in the ſeed of the ungodly to eat us up; far be this from the elders of the people in whom we truſted, and to whom we have commited the care of our ſubſtance.

4 Shall the ſtewards of the people aſſociate with the wicked? ſhall they ſell themſelves for filthy lucre? have their idols dazzled your eyes? or have ye lifted up your hands to their *mammon*?

5 Will ye give our birthright for a ſhekel of ſilver? or barter our traffick for a talent of gold? ſurely it ſhall not be ſpoken in the congregation of the elders.

6 But if it ſhall come to paſs, that you ſhall bring in among us the accurſed race, then ſhall our houſes be filled with vermine, and the land ſhall be ſcourged with the plague.

7 For the curſe denounced againſt them ſhall come npon us, and our children ſhall ſuffer for their ſakes; our corn ſhall be devoured of locuſts, and our wine ſhall be poiſon unto us.

8 Our ſhips ſhall be eaten up of worms in our ports, even the oak of the mountains ſhall be conſumed in our havens; for we ſhall no more go down unto the deep, nor do buſineſs in the mighty waters.

9 There ſhall be no more merchandiſe or bargaining; for the fruits of our labour, and the works of our hands, ſhall the circumciſed of the Gentiles take from us without money and without price.

10 No

10 No more ſhall we bring coſtly ſpices, or precious things from a far country, for they ſhall borrow of us our ſilver and gold, frankincenſe and myrrh, and deal with us as they did with the egyptians in former days.

11 For they ſhall ſcatter of their brethren, cunning men, throughout the earth, and they ſhall receive, at appointed ſeaſons, the treaſures which they have heaped up in this land.

12 And when we ſhall demand of them our money, they ſhall laugh us to ſcorn, for it ſhall not be found; and if we put up our complaints unto you, ye will not hear us, becauſe of the decree which you have made.

13 Therefore ſuffer us to go to a ſtrange country, we and our wives and our children; ſhall we fly to the king of the valley for ſhelter and put our confideuce in our mortal foe?

14 Or ſhall we rather betake ourſelves to the * great king of the eaſt who ruleth with judgment and mercy? for he hath been a *refuge* to the *afflicted* among the people, and a hiding-place to the *exiled* of the nations.

15 The *wanderer* hath he put in his way, and *kept* him till the *ſtorm* was overpaſt; he hath not deſpiſed the *perſecuted ones*, nor rejected the ſeed of the *helpleſs*.

16 With him the hungry findeth bread, and the hand of the diligent maketh rich; a man of knowlege is precious unto him, and a man of underſtanding, his ſoul loveth.

17 He hath enlarged his dominions, and multiplied his people; he hath given them cities wherein

* King of P------a.

wherein to dwell, and ſhips to plough the waters of the deep.

18 Yet hath he not encouraged the blaſphemer, nor taken the ungodly in his boſom; he hath not brought a plague into his dominions, nor peopled his land with locuſts.

19 He hath made kings to tremble, and princes to humble themſelves; therefore are the mighty afraid of him, and his enemies yield him obedience; O that our Rulers would receive his inſtructions, and our princes learn his wiſdom!

20 Therefore we pray you, let us depart, us and our wives and our children, and our ſubſtance; for we may not abide their coming, leſt they be too hard for us.

21 And our ſhips ſhall bear us hence, and we will ſell them to the *Frogs* who live among the *pools*; with them ſhall they cover the ocean, and gather the treaſures appointed for us and our offspring.

22 But, when the elders read the petition of the people, they deſpiſed it; for they ſaid they are blind to their own intereſt, and have no knowlege of the good things provided for them.

23 Therefore, with one accord, they confirmed the decree which came down from the rulers and the chief prieſts, and it was ſpread abroad throughout all the land.

CHAP.

* Vid. The Hiſt. of John Bull.

CHAP. IV.

Britannicus comforteth the people, the feaſt of Zimri to the rulers, &c.

AND when *Britannicus* heard that his prophecy was fulfilled, he was ſore troubled becauſe of his brethren; howbeit he comforted them, and gave them wiſe counſels,

2 And he ſaid unto the people, Becauſe your rulers have done this evil, ariſe, ſet your houſes in order, make ready your ſhips, and get you over the ſea to the land of Goſhen, for the inhabitants ſhall be delivered into your hand.

3 Ye ſhall take with you ſwords, and ſpears, and ſheilds, and helmets, and all the weapons of war, and all manner of proviſions; for ye ſhall fight againſt the barbarian, the heathen and the idolater.

4 Ye ſhall drive out the worſhippers of Mahomet the falſe prophet, even the ſeed of the Muſſulman, the Derviſe, and the Mufti; and ye ſhall take the ſpoil of their houſes for yourſelves, and your ſervants, and their ornaments for your wives and your daughters.

5 Ye ſhall not be afraid of them, becauſe your fathers eſſayed to conquer them, and were not able; for they were over-powered with numbers, and there were men of war among the heathen.

6 But now they are become effeminate thro' idleneſs and there is no ſpirit in them; but ye

are a numerous people, and there are mighty men of valour among you.

7 Therefore ariſe go forth againſt them; for you ſhall ſmite them with the edge of the ſword and utterly deſtroy them; and you ſhall take poſſeſſion of the old Jeruſalem, a very pleaſant city.

8 And you ſhall have Judea for an inheritance and Paleſtine for a poſſeſſion, even the land of the Amorites and the Hittites, the Hivites and the Jebuſites, which was promiſed to the Hebrews of old.

9 And you ſhall call the cities by your own names, and the circumciſed dare not enter therein; and you ſhall ſit down, every man under his figt-tree, and ſhall eat every man the fruit of his own vine.

10 And you ſhall be no more in perils of robbers by ſea, or publicans by land, for your ſhips ſhall be only for pleaſure; your ſervants ſhall go out by fifties and by hundreds, and ſhall laden their mules with the gold of Ophir, and the precious ſtones of Mocha.

11 Your wives and your daughters ſhall be cloathed in fine linnen of Egypt, and coſtly garments of perſia, even the choiceſt handy-work of the eaſt: they ſhall dance on the banks of Jordan, and ſkip like lambs on mount Ephraim.

12 Your houſes ſhall be adorned with goodly ornaments, and they ſhall ſmell of aloes myrrh and caſſia and all manner of ſpices: and you ſhall have flocks and herds and mules and camels in abundance,

13 But

13 But you ſhall make unto yourſelves a king of your own people, and you ſhall fix the limits of his government, and ſay unto him, hitherto ſhall thou go and no further.

14 And he ſhall be a man that is proved in war, for he ſhall go forth with your armies, and lead your ſons to battle: he ſhall enlarge your dominions; but you ſhall ſoon ſee your deſire on your enemies.

15 For the king of the valley ſhall come upon them like a giant, and ſhall deſtroy their new Jeruſalem, and their temples and their ſynagogues; for they are a faint hearted people and ſhall not be able to withſtand him.

16 Their Samſons, their Gideons and their Baraks, where are they? have they not ſlept with their fathers of a long time? ſo that there is not a man of war among them; and as for their cunning, it ſhall not avail, for their enemies as crafty as they.

17 Then ſhall they fly unto you for ſuccour that ye may deliver them out of the hands of the king of the valley; and they ſhall ſend their ſhips of war with preſents of gold and ſilver and all manner of gifts unto you.

18 But the ſhips of the enemy ſhall fall on them by the way and utterly deſtroy them, and take from them their treaſure, for they are too many for them.

19 And the land ſhall again become deſolate, and the circumciſed ſhall be puniſhed once more for their abominations, and for the evil they have done unto you; and their laſt ſtate ſhall be worſe than the beginning.

20 Thus

20 Thus did *Britannicus* comfort his brethren, but they would not be comforted; and the people wept bitterly and lamented with great lamentation, and cried,

21 Tell it not in Gath, publiſh it not in the ſtreets of Aſkelon, leaſt the daughters of the Hebrews rejoyce, leaſt the daughters of the circumciſed triumph.

22. How are the mighty fallen! From the blood of the *F-----h* and the fat of the *Sp-----d*, the faces of our Warriours turned not back, and the Swords of our Generals returned not empty.

23. Ye Temples of Juſtice! Let there be no more an Aſſembly of Rulers, nor a Congregation of Elders within your Gates; for there the Honour of the Nation was vilely caſt away, the Honour of *B—n*, as though it had not been precious unto us.

24. Ye Daughters of the land, weep over our *Trade*, which cloathed you in ſcarlet and other delights; which put ornaments of gold upon your apparel; how are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of liberty periſhed!

25. But Zimri rejoiced with exceeding great Joy; and he ſaid in the gladneſs of his heart, ſurely this is come to paſs by the counſels of my wiſdom, and the power of my *Talents*; therefore ſhall it be ſpoken in the ſynagogues and had in everlaſting remembrance.

26. And Zimri made a great feaſt unto the Rulers and the Judges of the land, and he made them merry with wine, and they fell aſleep; and he brought in of his brethren and ſpoiled them of

their Silver and their Gold, and cut off their foreſkins.

27. And when they awoke they gazed every man on his neighbour and behold they were all circumciſed, and there was not a ſhekel of ſilver among them; and they queſtioned Zimri ſharply concerning it.

28. So when Zimri ſaw that he was accuſed; he ſaid, ſurely I took from you your money that it might not fall into the hands of your ſervants and be loſt; for ye were overtaken with ſtrong drink, therefore took I care of it.

29. Know likewiſe that ye are all circumciſed, and become every man of you an Hebrew among the Hebrews; for we were perſwaded ye were nothing loath to ſuffer this thing before ye received us among you; for this is our law and our prophets.

30 Nevertheleſs they were fretted for the loſs of their foreſkins, for they waxed very ſore; howbeit Zimri gave them a treſpaſs-offering, and they were healed: and they remembred the feaſt, and it is called the *feaſt* of *circumciſion* unto this day.

31 And when Zimri and his fellows had purified the Gold and Silver which they took from the Rulers, even five thouſand pieces, he reſtored them; and he proſpered whitherſoever he went.

32 Now the reſt of the acts of Zimri and all that he did, and the number that he circumciſed, and how he deceived the people and ſpoiled them, ſhall they not be written in the records of the *Sanhedrim*, and in the Books of *Britannicus* the ſeer?

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